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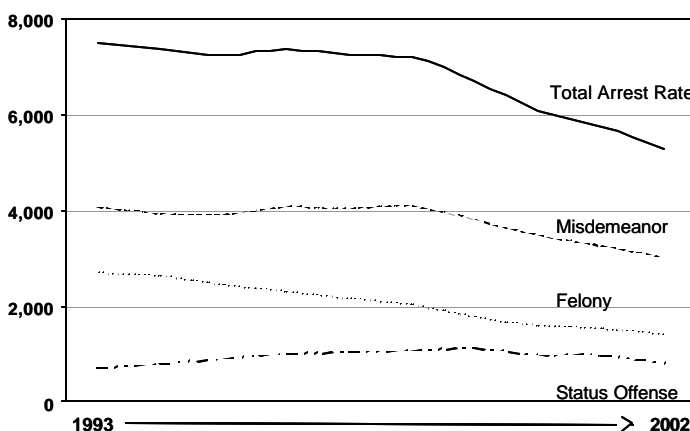
RESEARCH UPDATE

December 1, 2003

California Juvenile Delinquency Data

Arrests

In 2002, there were 229,634 juvenile arrests, or 5,249 per 100,000 Californians ages 10 to 17. That rate marks a 30% decline in juvenile arrests over the decade—from 7,479 arrests per 100,000 in 1993, taking into account the increase in youth age 10 to 17 years old in California over the decade (see chart at right). The felony arrest rate fell consistently throughout the decade, for a 10 year decline of 48% (from 2,696 to 1,407). The misdemeanor offense rate decline began only in 1999 but was quite steep, accounting for a 26% decline in the arrest rate in that category over the decade (from 4,076 to 3,028).



The population-adjusted figures suggest that delinquency in California has declined but they do not speak to the workload of the public institutions that respond to delinquency. The absolute decline in arrests over the decade has been only 10%.

Of total 2002 arrest charges, 27% were felonies, 58% were misdemeanors, and the remaining 15% were status offenses.¹ The 2002 distribution is markedly different from that of 1993, when 36% of the most severe arrest charges were felonies, 55% were misdemeanors, and only 9% were status offenses.

Female youth were 26% of the juvenile arrestee population in 2002. The age at arrest was 12 or younger for 8% of all juvenile arrests. Hispanic youth were 43% of the 2002 juvenile arrestees, white youth were 33%, black youth were 17%, and other racial and ethnic groups together were 7%.

¹ When there are multiple charges per arrest, the arrestee is characterized by the most severe arrest charge.

Court Cases

In 2002, there were 84,153 filings, of which 54,699 were original delinquency filings, 27,363 were subsequent delinquency filings, 2,038 were original status-offense filings, and 53 were subsequent status-offense filings. (Subsequent filings alter or enhance the original charge and are not always reflective of a separate alleged offense, although they will be disposed of separately from the original filing. Original filings are more representative of alleged offenses.) The 2002 total original filings of 56,737 represent an 11% drop in caseload since 1993. The proportional mix of delinquency and status-offense cases remained fairly constant. About 1–3% of the juvenile filings are for status-offense cases each year, although those cases compose about 16% of juvenile arrests.

About 1 in 4 juvenile arrests are brought to juvenile court. The relationship between arrest and original filings has remained unchanged over the past 10 years. Likewise, throughout the decade, an average of 86 juvenile cases were disposed of for every 100 original filings in any given year.² The year-to-year deviation from that average has been slight.

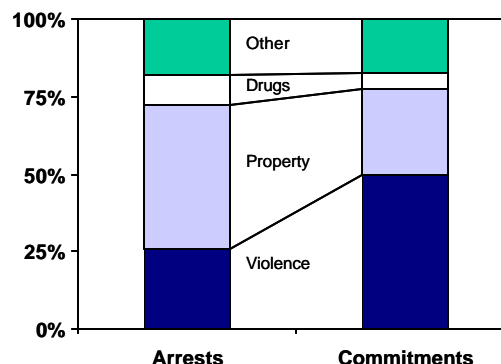
Detention

In 2002, 1,402 youth were committed to the California Youth Authority (CYA). A very large majority of these commitments were ordered by the juvenile court (95%); the rest of the youth were ordered by criminal court to serve some or all of their detention time at the CYA. Last year, the juvenile court committed 42.6 per 100,000 California youth to the CYA. The rate of commitment has fallen by more than 55% in the last decade.

Females were 7% of the population committed in 2002, which, while small, represents a 78% increase from 1993. The racial and ethnic composition of the 2002 commitments was 16% white, 51% Hispanic, 27% black, 4% Asian, and 2% Other. The average age at admission was 17.2 years in 2002; that number has remained constant over the decade.

² Cases may be disposed of in the year they are filed or in subsequent years.

Some offense types are more likely to lead to CYA commitment than other types. Youth found on violent charges are more likely to be committed than youth found on property, drugs, or other charges (see chart at right). Violent charges were 26% of juvenile felony arrest charges and 49% of primary commitment charges in 2001. Property offenses were 46% of felony arrest charges and 28% of commitment charge; and drugs were 9% of felony arrest charges and 5% of primary commitment charges.



Probation

In 2001, the state's juvenile probation caseload was 87,186, of which 81% were formal probation cases, 16% were informal probation cases, and 3% were non-ward probation cases. These proportions have remained constant over the past decade. Among youth on formal probation, 6,069 were in foster care.

The number of probation cases in 2001 fell 10% from 97,187 in 1996 (the earliest year for which comparable figures are available). Once adjusted for population growth, however, probation figures fell by 20%: out of 100,000 youth 10 to 17 years old, 2,081 were on probation in 2001 and 2,607 were on probation in 1996.

A 2002 survey of chief probation officers in California showed that 42 of 52 responding counties offered probation services that they considered compatible with balanced and restorative justice principles (see chart at right). Community service, mediation, restitution, and peer court are restorative justice innovations that have been the most widely adopted.

Restorative Juvenile Probation Services

26	Community Service
24	Mediation or Conferencing
21	Restitution collection
16	Peer Court
13	Boards
13	Community Law Enforcement
13	Deferred Entry of Judgment
13	Victim Expression
7	Mentoring
6	Community Conferencing
18	Other
170	Total

Crime Incidence in Public Schools

About 6 million children were enrolled in public elementary, middle school, and high schools in California in 2000. According to the California Department of Education, there were about 94,000 crime incidents in those schools. About 85% of those crimes were about equally divided among battery, property crime, and drug or alcohol offenses. The remainder were possession of a deadly weapon (8%), assault with a deadly weapon (2%), sex offenses (2%), robbery and extortion. There were also two homicides.

About the *California Juvenile Statistical Abstract*

The *California Juvenile Statistical Abstract*, a project underway by AOC's Center for Families, Children & the Courts, is a compilation of reliable, representative statistical data about children and families involved in the courts and with related institutions. It will be available on the Internet in 2004.

This *Research Update* is one of a series that summarize data from the Abstract.

Data Sources

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